

AUG 5 1959

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Director, FBI
FROM : Legal Attache, Havana (64-818)
SUBJECT: JOHN MARTINO
PC - RM

DATE: July 31, 1959

The above-captioned individual was arrested on July 23, 1959, by the Cuban Revolutionary Police. His twelve-year-old son, EDWARD, was detained at the same time. Police accused him of having entered Cuba in a private plane without permission.

The following information was received from HUGH D. KESSLER, Welfare Officer, U. S. Embassy, Havana, Cuba:

MARTINO actually entered Cuba, according to Pan American Airways records, via Pan American Flight from Miami, Florida, at 5:45 P.M. on July 23, 1959. He was accompanied by his son, EDWARD. MARTINO stated he went to a private home to deliver a personal message to a friend and there met a woman named SOFIA. He was later arrested at his hotel. The woman "SOFIA" was identified as Mrs. SOFIA VENTURA, wife of the notorious Batista police officer, Major ESTEBAN VENTURA PRO, who was one of the police accused of various heinous crimes during the Batista regime.

Mr. KESSLER stated he was furnished the following information by a Dr. ESTEVEZ of Havana, Cuba. Dr. ESTEVEZ first met MARTINO about ten months ago when MARTINO was staying at the Hotel Deauville, Havana, where Dr. ESTEVEZ is the hotel physician. At that time he treated MARTINO for a kidney ailment. After treating him, Dr. ESTEVEZ became friendly with MARTINO and saw him quite frequently. MARTINO has made twelve to fourteen visits to Cuba since January 1, 1959. According to Dr. ESTEVEZ, MARTINO was a close friend of many former members of the Batista government, such as ESTEBAN VENTURA, ROLANDO MASPERRER (ex-Cuban Senator and political gangster), IRENALDO GARCIA BAEZ (ex-Head of Cuban Army Intelligence), and of many American gamblers such as SANTOS TRAFFICANTE, Top Hoodlum from Tampa, Florida.

According to Dr. ESTEVEZ, MARTINO originally came to Cuba to establish a branch of his Radio-Page Corporation as he was in trouble in the United States regarding income tax matters.

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MARTINO was also engaged in a smuggling venture with MASPERER involving the movement of autos and eggs through the Cuban Port of Mariel, about 20 miles from Havana.

MARTINO approached Dr. ESTEVEZ regarding being the house physician for a house of prostitution which MARTINO planned to open near the Deauville Hotel. MARTINO's close friend and business associate in the United States was Mr. ALLEN/ROTH.

Dr. ESTEVEZ volunteered the information that his family, including his two brothers, were strong supporters of Prime Minister FIDEL CASTRO RUZ and that his two brothers are presently in the Revolutionary Army. Dr. ESTEVEZ added that his conversations with police officials led him to believe that MARTINO was being held only to obtain information and that he would be released if he desired to tell Government officials concerning his contacts. MARTINO is presently confined to the Chief of Police Headquarters in Havana.

Bureau will be kept advised on this matter.

Extra copies of this communication are being forwarded to the Bureau for the attention of the Miami Office.

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